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## NEWS AND NOTES

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### THE NATIONAL COUNCIL AT PITTSBURGH

The three sessions of the National Council scheduled to be held during the summer meeting of the National Education Association at Pittsburgh were condensed to two and carried out on July 4 under the chairmanship of President Miller. Those obliged to be absent were Mr. Wheaton, Mr. Smith, Miss Crumpton, and Professor Stevens. The experience of the Council was typical. All of the societies meeting at Pittsburgh registered a much smaller attendance than usual, both of speakers and of listeners.

The Council program as actually presented was, however, excellent. No more timely or useful paper has been presented before the Council than that by Superintendent Cody of Detroit on "Americanization Courses in Public Schools." Speaking from his personal observation in Detroit, where he has charge of the work of Americanization in the public schools, Mr. Cody declared that the chief aims of the Americanization movement should be, first, to awaken a desire on the part of the alien to become a citizen, and, second, to assist him in the attainment of his desire. The first aim may be attained very largely in regular classes; for the second, special provision must be made. The co-operation of employers, chambers of commerce, the courts, and citizens generally must be secured and an all-year-round campaign conducted. Teachers in the schools have a tremendous opportunity in working out suitable courses and in developing effective methods.

Though unable to be present, Mr. W. C. Smith, supervisor of immigrant education for New York state, sent a paper setting forth very concretely how the forces of our largest commonwealth have been "mobilized" in a drive against illiteracy. The work is done in close co-operation with the United States Bureau of Education and embodies the recommendations of the Bureau. Among the agencies employed are day and evening school classes, classes in shops and factories, lectures, neighborhood clubs, training courses in civics for the newly naturalized, community information centers, community singing, public demonstrations, parades, etc. By enactment of the state legislature English must be learned by all minors over sixteen. The main task is to develop a true American spirit.

Mr. John M. Clapp, of the Ronald Press, New York, followed Mr. Cody, and spoke again in the afternoon, on both occasions pleading for a direct attack upon the problem of American speech and quoting from recent writers to show that contemporary poetry is worthy of much serious attention. The era of cloistered scholarship, he believes, is past. Teachers must mingle actively in the world of affairs and learn from the ways of business how to apply intelligent system in schools. Large use could profitably be made of the phonograph and of similar inventions in the teaching of language. English instruction should aim at practical results—and secure them. The fact that Mr. Clapp has so recently gone from college teaching into business lent added interest to his views.

The morning program was concluded by President Miller, who spoke on "The Normal Load of the English Teacher." In summary he said: "To discuss intelligently the normal load of the English teacher, it is necessary to determine first of all what an English teacher is. In order to determine what an English teacher or a teacher of English is, it is necessary to determine what is meant by English.

"English really comprises two subjects, expression and appreciation, or, as they are usually described, composition and literature. In some school systems, English means simply appreciation or literature. In others, it means usually composition or expression; while in still others it is used to describe a sad and inexpressible conglomeration of the two subjects. However, when bran and wheat are mixed, bran usually predominates; and so, when composition and literature are mixed, literature usually predominates.

"If English means composition, the English teacher should, in my judgment, be assigned not to exceed four classes, each meeting five times a week for a period of forty-five minutes daily. He should be placed, in other words, upon the same basis as the teacher of laboratory science. My reasons for this conclusion are: first, my own experience running through a period of twenty-years; and, second, the results of Professor Hopkins' careful analysis of the subject. Stated broadly, the reason why the teacher of composition should have no more work than I have indicated is that he must spend a relatively large amount of time and patience upon each composition that is submitted to him by his pupils.

"If, on the other hand, English means literature, it is my judgment that a teacher can easily handle five classes, each meeting five times a week for a daily period of forty-five minutes.

"If English means a combination of composition and literature, I think that the best solution of the problem is to hire a new superintendent of schools, making sure that he understands what English really means.

"The great practical difficulty in obtaining for composition teachers the reduction of their classes to four a week or an equivalent is and has been the cost. This can, perhaps, be arranged in some rare instances by skilful appeals to school boards. Before school boards, however, can be converted, superintendents must be converted; and one of the great pieces of work which can be accomplished by our organization is to undertake this difficult propaganda.

"In the meantime, some alleviation of the situation can be secured by a judicious administration of the English department in each high school. To each English teacher, in other words, may be assigned three composition classes and two literature classes, and vice versa in alternating semesters. This arrangement normally would give each teacher forty pupils in composition one semester and sixty the next, which is a heavy but not an overwhelming burden. Still further relief can be obtained by a careful analysis of the nature of the composition process and an application thereof to the teaching process.

"Some teachers seem to think that in order to teach composition all they have to do is to say to a class: 'The lesson tomorrow will consist of a composition of four hundred words on the subject of the "Metaphors in Tennyson's Poetry."' The next day the class produces a large number of bad compositions which they have evolved out of their own ignorance and a few good ones which they have stolen from the critics. The teacher takes these home and attempts to read them, the result being that he is reduced to a state of sodden despair. The class, needless to say, when subjected to this sort of treatment, fails to profit largely, while the teacher, if he conscientiously tries to read the stuff which they write and to re-read it as he should, is constantly buried under mountains of work.

"This sort of thing, needless to say, is not composition teaching. In order to teach composition aright we must study the methods of composition which have been practised by successful writers. If we do this we shall find, to make a long story short, that successful composition ordinarily resolves itself into the following processes: (1) the gathering of material; (2) its arrangement; (3) oral composition; (4) written composition; (5) revision; (6) publication; (7) the reaction that follows publication.

"In order to teach successfully, the school should provide for each of these processes. If it does this, the drudgery of composition teaching will be minimized and the English teacher, instead of being a slave, will become a king among pedagogues."

"Auditorium Work," the first topic of the afternoon, was discussed at length by Miss Minnie Porter, of New Philadelphia, Ohio, formerly of the Emerson School in Gary, Indiana. Her account of how David found himself in telling about his visit to the circus will be long remembered by those who heard it. Her main contentions were as follows:

"The school auditorium is the school forum, the real forum of democracy. From all classes—from the professions and the business world, from agricultural pursuits, and from trades and industry—leaders are to be developed in a democracy. They are to be developed through training and ability to present the interests, the needs of a particular group, not only to a specialized audience, be it medical association, commercial club, farmers' organization, or labor union, but also through their ability to interpret particular needs and interests in terms of the organized life of a community.

"In modern schools the auditorium is being utilized for this definite educational purpose as the center of the community life of the school and of the larger world of men and affairs as interpreted by young people of varying ages and interests. Here do young people find opportunity to give expression to the real and vital interests and to interpret these interests to an audience of their mates.

"Such a conception of auditorium work in a school community demands a definite place in the school program. No mere occasional performance, no artificial display will satisfy the demands of a school forum. The social ideal of democracy of the modern school demands for auditorium work its natural place in the life of a school community and consequently a definite place in the day's schedule.

"The relation of the class in English composition to auditorium work is quite clear. A pupil comes to the English classroom bringing with him wealth: the interests of school life from all departments, from laboratory and shop. The pupil here learns to translate his special interest into terms of the general audience of the auditorium. He has at the outset two conditions essential to his success. He has, first, a big idea to which he wishes to give expression and, in the second place, he has a sympathetic understanding of the temper and tastes of the audience of his mates.

"The teacher of English composition must determine the principles of rhetoric and composition which will enable the boy to succeed under the given conditions. A careful analysis reveals but a few fundamentals. (1) The speaker must stick to his big idea. (2) He must arrange his subordinate ideas according to a simple plan to make them most effective. (3) He must develop his big idea concretely. It is a simple program of attack, but if carried through it will enable an inexperienced speaker to succeed with his audience.

"This training will best be accomplished through the co-operative effort of the classroom. Each member of the class has a similar problem. So-called class criticism has no place in this work. The class may coax and encourage more vivid stories, may suggest new possibilities. Through this co-operative effort a boy's ideas take form, grow, and become fired by imagination which stirs. In such co-operative effort the common problems of meeting our audience are being solved.

"The pupil's work in English composition for the auditorium takes the form of a definite problem or project worked out under conditions essential to success. The teacher's instruction serves at the point when vital interests are demanding expression. It, therefore, meets definite problems to which the instruction is at once applied.

"But the pupil has the distinct advantage in the completion of his undertaking. He sees the thing work. He gets a genuine reaction when he presents his big idea to the audience. He watches the same reaction when one of his mates becomes the speaker. When the varying interests of the school community as well as world of men and affairs represented by young people are given expression in the school forum, the mutual understanding and leadership thus developed must furnish a safer, a more intelligent basis for the social ideal of democracy."

Mr. Carl W. Ziegler, of Scranton, Pennsylvania, painted a very attractive picture of a "Laboratory Method" in English. Teaching English in Osceola under ideal conditions was an uninterrupted joy. Pupils remained in the school during the whole of the day and in double consecutive periods reveled in the delights which the teacher's classroom library afforded. The paintings on the wall, the stage at one end, and a wealth of similar equipment made possible a range and variety of activity quite impossible under ordinary conditions.

Council members had the pleasure for the first time in several years of hearing from Mr. Ernest C. Noyes, who is now assistant superintendent of schools in Allegheny County, Pennsylvania. Speaking of "High Spots in Oral English in the Elementary School" he said in part:

"Since skill in speech not only adds greatly to power and influence in society, business, the professions, and public activities generally, but also carries with it skill in writing, practice tending to form correct habits of expression is today taking the place of the formal study of rules and definitions which in times past usurped the major share of the time devoted to language. Every progressive teacher puts training in speech first in her language plans today and gives it at least three-fifths of the language time.

"The six high spots in oral language training are aim, motivation, choice of subjects, delivery, correct usage, and example. The aim of this work should be to turn out pupils able to talk for a few minutes upon a subject within the range of their knowledge and experience, speaking distinctly, in clean-cut sentences, and without violating grossly the laws of correct usage. The ardor of the child to express something that is vital to him is the motive which the teacher of oral language must arouse if she is to achieve success. As often as possible, the recitations in other subjects than English ought to furnish the situation in which every child has something to present which is his own, different from what others have prepared, and which the rest of the class are eager to hear. The experiences and observations children have in their home, school, and community relations should furnish the main source of subjects. Children know best and can talk best about their own personal experiences. Reproduction should be used seldom, for it constitutes only an exercise in memory. Subjects should be carefully limited and worded concisely and attractively. Delivery includes ease and fluency and distinctness of utterance. Ease and fluency will grow with frequent practice and encouragement if subjects are chosen so as to lead the speaker to forget himself in his subject. Distinct speaking plays as large a part in talking as penmanship and spelling do in writing. It can be secured only as a result of constant, unrelenting drill. Phonic exercises together with attention in every lesson to clear articulation, distinct enunciation, correct pronunciation, and right inflection are the means to be used for improvement of utterance. To secure observance of the laws of correct usage the teacher must make practice and instruction go hand in hand. The study of the mechanics of language is of value only when the child needs to use the forms studied and can put his knowledge to use at once. Good English is a habit and like any other habit it must be mastered not by rules but by practice. Games and similar devices will help to make the necessary practice drill interesting, and progress will be greatly increased if the teacher can enlist the children's voluntary co-operation

in correcting their errors. After all, however, 'Language is caught, not taught.' Imitation, conscious and unconscious, is the most powerful force molding the child's English. The teacher must bear in mind always that her language is her pupil's model and that her example may either be a constant force for good English or may vitiate every principle she attempts to teach. She who wishes to improve the language of her class must begin with her own."

The concluding paper, by Mr. Walter Barnes, of the Fairmont State Normal School in West Virginia, dealt by special request with the topic "The Book of Selections: Its Value in Teaching High-School Literature." The speaker pointed out that anthologies were common in England as long ago as the days of Shakespeare. The ordinary school reader, moreover, is also a mere collection. The use of anthologies in high school is apparently not of long standing but is doubtless justified. What it needs is more judicious selection, made with special regard to the tastes and capacities of high-school pupils. Formal organization of the material should be avoided, both that of chronological order and that of "types." A better principle is that of likeness of subject or "tone."

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#### MEETING OF THE LIBRARY DEPARTMENT OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION AT PITTSBURGH

The programs and exhibits of the Library Department of the National Education Association were peculiarly successful in catching the attention of teachers and school administrators. The sessions of the department were well attended by both teachers and librarians. Subjects emphasized on the programs were "High-School Library Standardization," "Book Selection," and "Library Co-operation with the Junior Red Cross." Mr. Hosc and Mr. Miller of the Council presented papers on "Book Selection." Mr. Hosc discussed a program of book selection based upon social values. Mr. Miller related his experiences in the choice of reading for high-school boys.

The committees of the Library Department made reports on plans of co-operation with the Junior Red Cross Library Committee which is attempting under the direction of Mr. C. C. Certain to give helpful information concerning channels through which the circulation of appropriate literature for libraries, schools, and homes may be effected. It is the purpose of the Junior Red Cross Library Committee to suppress in every way possible books that stir a "cheap emotional excitement that



passes for patriotism," and to promote through the Junior Red Cross, the Commission on National Emergency, and other educational and patriotic organizations the reading of such literature as will give Americans "an appreciation for their country's part in the agelong struggle for democracy, and strengthen the desire to perform unselfish service."

Miss Clara Hunt of Brooklyn, New York, Miss Annie Cutter of Cleveland, Ohio, and Mr. Edwin L. Miller of Detroit, Michigan, contributed as their part on the program selected book lists to stimulate the circulation of patriotic literature and to aid in sifting out harmful and un-American literature.

The Library Department of the National Education Association pledged support to the Library Committee of the Junior Red Cross in the effort to make all Junior Red Cross plans more operative. The Junior Red Cross Library Committee has planned a monthly schedule for the ensuing year, co-ordinating library service with the monthly school program outlined by the National Junior Red Cross. The month of January, 1919, has been designated as Junior Red Cross month in libraries and schools. During the month interest will be centered in our "International Relations."

At a joint session of the Library Department and the Secondary Department a report was adopted on "Standard Library Organization and Equipment for Secondary Schools of Different Sizes." The report is expected to establish a national standard for the development of high-school libraries.<sup>1</sup> On a motion by Superintendent Newlon of Lincoln, Nebraska, the Committee on Standardization was continued. The committee will undertake to develop a technique in library use. Mr. Newlon pointed out that a "library technique" is needed more in keeping with the social concept of education. The plans suggested by Mr. Newlon were in harmony with views expressed by Dr. Robert Aley, president of the University of Maine, Orono, Maine, by Mr. Churchill, state superintendent of education, Salem, Oregon, and Mr. Rule, principal of the Schenley High School, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

An informing library exhibit was maintained in the Schenley High School under the direction of Miss Clara Howard, librarian for that institution. The exhibit was prepared by Miss Sara Baldwin of the Allegheny High School and Miss Nina Brotherton of the Carnegie Library.

<sup>1</sup>Copies of the report may be secured from Mr. C. C. Certain, Cass Technical High School, Detroit, Michigan.

## THE PERIODICALS

## A POLICY IN COLLEGIATE EDUCATION

William Allen Neilson in his inaugural address as the president of Smith College, printed in *School and Society* of July 20, is unusually frank in his statement that the college is a place of special privilege for those students whose abilities entitle them to this particular opportunity. He holds that it is in accordance with the democratic ideal to give those who have special abilities the opportunity to develop them. Then he devotes himself to the old quarrel between the sciences and the humanities. Recognizing not only the utilitarian, but also the cultural, value of science, he turns to consider the value of the humanities. The failure of the partisans of the humanities has been due rather to their emphasis upon language almost as an end in itself rather than as a means of revealing the real life and thought of the ancient world. Since, in spite of our best efforts, very few are ever able to read Greek or Latin fluently enough to enjoy the literature, a wise temporary solution would be the use of Greek and Latin literature in translation. He quotes with approval the definition of humanities in the English Education Bill as "those studies which shall acquaint the student with the capacities and ideals of mankind as expressed in literature and art, with its achievements and ambitions as recorded in history, and with the nature and laws of the world as interpreted by science, philosophy, and religion." We must be careful, however, not to insist upon knowledges and to neglect the evaluation of those knowledges. And, finally, all this expression and thinking should have an outlet in writing, music, or some other art.

To the same issue of *School and Society* Professor H. C. Nutting contributes a letter on "Democratizing Education," in which he insists that true democracy means the opportunity for each to develop his best abilities and that if we deprive the ablest of our pupils of the opportunities which the high schools have formerly offered, we shall be as false to our trust as we have been in the past in neglecting the mediocre and the weak.

## THE RELIABILITY OF READING TESTS

Professor Daniel Starch reports in *School and Society* of July 20 an investigation into the reliability of the Kansas silent reading test, the Thorndike vocabulary and sentence test, and his own speed and comprehension test. We quote his summary:

"1. The three tests here compared are fairly reliable, and practically equally reliable, measures of reading ability both when correlated with

the teachers' marks and when correlated with one another. The coefficients on the basis of single measures between any one of the tests and the teachers' marks are from .60 to .70. They would probably be even higher if the tests were applied under ideal conditions and if the comparison could be made with perfect measures of reading ability which obviously teachers' marks are not.

"2. A single application of any one of the three reading tests is probably from three to five times as reliable as the mark given to a piece of work by a single teacher."

#### A TYPE COURSE IN DRAMA

Theodore B. Hinckley's article on "The Drama and the English Course" in the June *School Review* is a plea for the use of the drama as a type course. The drama has an advantage over other types which might be used in that it gives the student a better all-round training. The social thought and ethical standards of today are very clearly mirrored in the drama, and the diversity of modern drama will call for the vital introduction and application of all the general principles of art and literature which a high-school student most needs. It has the further advantage of making an intimate appeal to the pupil's interest.

The University High School course begins with a rapid reading of modern drama. A play is read in two days and discussed for a week, the pupils reading other short ones at home in the meanwhile. Soon chapters from Richard Burton's *How to See a Play* or Elizabeth Hunt's *The Play of Today* are read in connection with different plays. About the eighth week each pupil brings in a plot for discussion by the class, and when his plot is approved writes a play. From these the class and instructor choose and revise such as are worthy of presentation. The reading done by the class jumps from modern plays to *The Rivals* and *She Stoops to Conquer*, and then to Shakespeare, to *Everyman*, then over to the French of Molière, and at last to Euripides. Such a class project occasions numerous genuine projects in expression—reports upon problems which have arisen in the study or staging of the plays.

#### TEACHER AND STUDENT

*School and Society* of July 27 prints Professor Lane Cooper's address before the New Jersey Association of Teachers of English last March, with the title "Teacher and Student." Professor Cooper identifies the successful teacher with the student, very wittily and earnestly insisting that no teacher who is not really well versed in his subject can teach it,

and that only one who himself is constantly growing will best inspire pupils to grow. The man of general education, with no intensive knowledge of any one field, he likens to the sophists. Finally, he recommends a course of study which teachers of English may give to themselves as a vital elixir. In the first place, for educational ideas go to Plato. Then take an intensive course in your favorite author, studying thoroughly his life, everything he has written, and the comments of others upon him, with reliving his life and rethinking his thoughts as your main purpose. Then study the principles of literature, choosing for your teachers Plato, Aristotle, Horace, Shelley, Wordsworth, Cicero, Quintilian, and Burke. Out of this study of the principles of literature will grow a study of the types—epic, drama, novel, and so on—and this will lead one inevitably away from English to the Mediterranean literatures, especially to the Greek and Roman, since in matters of intellect they are our nearest neighbors.

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#### USEFUL DOCUMENTS

Bureau of Education *Bulletin No. 41*, 1917, lists more than two thousand library books for high schools (15 cents). It is compiled by Martha Wilson, who is also responsible for *School Library Management*, issued by the Minnesota Department of Education, St. Paul.—Bureau of Education *Bulletin No. 54*, 1917, is "Training in Courtesy," intended particularly for the elementary school, by Martha S. McNought.—The following Bureau of Education Bulletins, 1918, are now available: *No. 3*, "Agricultural Instruction in the High Schools of Six Eastern States"; *No. 6*, "The Curriculum of the Woman's College"; *No. 7*, "The Bureau of Extension of the University of North Carolina"; *No. 11*, "A Community Center"; *No. 13*, "The Land Grant of 1862 and the Land Grant Colleges."—Vol. III, No. 3, of *Type Studies and Lesson Plans*, by Charles A. McMurry, Nashville, Tennessee, is "The Muscle Shoals."—"A Handbook of the War for Readers, Speakers, and Teachers" has been edited by Albert Bushnell Hart and Arthur O. Lovejoy and issued by the National Security League, 19 W. Forty-fourth Street, New York.